

# ASC

The Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas

# STRATEGIC PLAN

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## 2022-2026



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## **MISSION**

The Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas serves as a cultural crossroad: engaging, educating, and entertaining through the arts and sciences.

## **VISION**

Changing lives through creativity.

# CORE VALUES

## **EXCELLENCE THROUGH PRACTICE...**

- Uphold the highest standards in current museum best practices through our accreditation by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM).
- Be accountable and transparent in all our endeavors.
- To always be good stewards of our resources.
- Leverage our funding support to bring cultural and educational opportunities to all through free gallery admission, free hands-on activities, and free school field trips.

## **CREATE CONNECTIONS...**

- Strive to be a museum “without walls” --- never expecting the community to only come to us, but, instead, seek out opportunities to bring the museum to the community through meaningful and mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Create lasting relationships and impactful outreach in the community through partnerships.

## **EMBRACE INNOVATION...**

- Offer opportunities to improve and bolster workforce development in our neighborhood and community.
- Keep abreast of trends in STEAM education and create innovative ways to incorporate trends into existing and future programming.

## **ADVANCE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY...**

- Serve as a cultural crossroads for our community, providing opportunities to learn from each other.
- Ignite curiosity and encourage respect through open dialogue.  
Support and foster diversity among staff, Board of Trustees, volunteers and our audience.

## **BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR...**

- Be aware and respectful of how we use and interact in public spaces around us — residential neighbors, as well as businesses, other non-profit and cultural organizations, and City government.
- Participate in activities that improve the quality of life of our neighbors
- Be a proactive contributor to the revitalization of Downtown Pine Bluff

# A BRIEF HISTORY . . .

The Center (as it was originally known) was founded in 1968 when several local arts groups consolidated and later made a commission of the City of Pine Bluff in 1971. The name was changed to The Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas (ASC) in 1987. Until the earlier 1990s, ASC was housed in the basement of the Pine Bluff City Hall/Civic Center. In 1994, ASC opened its new (current) 22,000- square-foot facility with four galleries, a 232-seat theater, and classroom space. We received accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) in 2001 and reaccreditation in 2016. We uphold the highest standards through our accreditation with the AAM and these standards emanate throughout our community.

The Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas's mission is to serve as a cultural crossroad; engaging, educating, and entertaining through the arts and sciences. ASC presents programming in the visual arts, performing arts, and the sciences through exhibits, performances, classes, monthly events, and local partnerships. Our educational programming focuses on the intersection of STEM and Art to create STEAM – arts & technology education. Gallery admission, hands-on family programming, school field trips, and after-school programming is free. Additionally, we preserve the cultural heritage of our region through the interpretation of our Permanent Collection consisting of 1,300 artworks. Our collecting scope includes Arkansas artists, Art of the Delta, and African American artists.

In 2020, the Arts & Science Center underwent a campus expansion through the renovation of two historic storefronts next door to the museum on Main Street. The ARTSpace on Main and ART WORKS on Main officially opened in the September 2021. The ARTSpace is a multi-use arts and events space featuring a retail gallery, event and exhibition galleries, STEAM lab, and artist workshop studio. Its sister facility, ART WORKS on Main, features a 65-seat black box theater and three artist apartments and studios for visiting teaching artists. The Museum, The ARTSpace and ART WORKS make up the ARTx3 campus.

For the past 50 years, ASC has operated for the benefit of all citizens of Southeast Arkansas, ensuring access to the arts for everyone.





The American Alliance of Museums described ASC as “a small, mighty museum,” that provides programming and access to meet the changing needs of its mid-size city and rural service area through its cultural crossroad mission statement.

It has transitioned to new staff leadership, maintained its mission during the 2020-2021 Covid pandemic and added two new facilities to expand education, events, theater, programming and access.

ASC maintains focus on growing and preserving its 1,455 piece Permanent Collection to celebrate the artistic excellence of Arkansas artists, art of the Delta, and African American artists.

## Accomplishments, milestones and challenges over previous strategic planning years...

### 2016

- Received AAM reaccreditation, which described ASC as “a small, mighty museum serving its community with significant impact.”
- Received the Governor’s Arts Award for Art Education.
- Named “Nonprofit of the year” by the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce.
- Received the Outstanding Achievement in Conservation Award from the Arkansas Museum Association (AMA) for conservation of African-American artworks.
- Served 23,366 in 2016.

### 2017

- “A great place to learn and be inspired locally in Pine Bluff!”
- Transitioned leadership to new Executive Director, Dr. Rachel Miller, showing resilience and adaptability, ensuring institutional memory continues to be preserved.
- Served 30,410 people (up 23% from 2016).
- Added several new programs including documentary film screenings, more Pre-K literacy & arts outreach programs, a community bike-repair studio, an after-school STEAM program, and longer summer youth camps. ASC also expanded arts & technology outreach programs to area libraries, senior centers, the Boys & Girls Club, and adult developmental centers, and grew its partnership with University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB).
- Received nomination for the Henry Award for Excellence in Arkansas Tourism, 43rd Annual Governor’s Conference on Tourism.
- Served 30,549 in 2017 (up 30% from 2016).



# 2018

- Celebrated 50 years of service as a cultural crossroad.
- Launched youth theater-immersion program, “The Stage” and theater maker space.
- Received a \$2.2 million Windgate Foundation grant that supported the renovation of our annex building as a multi-use arts and events community space for our new project, The ARTSpace on Main.
- Installed artwork by Pine Bluff natives Kevin Cole and James Hayes in the atrium, commissioned to celebrate ASC’s 50th anniversary.
- Raised over \$80,000 during *Potpourri: Cheers to the Next 50 Years!* — our biennial fundraiser.
- Continued growth in response to the needs of the community with the addition of programs like Yoga for Kids, “The Stage” theater maker space, and the Crossroad Festival.
- Served 21,181 in 2018. Visitors came from 127 cities, 25 states, and 4 countries. In 2019, ASC offered 76 programs, 16 exhibits, and 31 performances to our community.

# 2019

- Celebrated the 25th anniversary of the current museum location, 701 S. Main St., serving as a downtown anchor. The Main St. location opened in 1994.
- Finalized building design plans for our new community engagement project, The ARTSpace on Main - a two-story, multi-use arts and events space adjacent to ASC.
- Completed design and construction documents for the ARTSpace on Main in late 2019.
- ASC Endowment purchased the future ART WORKS building (627 S. Main St.) in October 2019.
- Launched a series (now known as CrEATe Lab) promoting healthy eating for Jefferson County families in partnership with Faith Anaya, founder of youth cooking school KidsCook! This program expanded in 2020 through workshops and summer camps.
- Served 22,293 in 2019 (up 5% from 2018). Visitors came from 84 cities, 18 states, and 4 countries. ASC grew its Facebook following to 2,753 and Instagram following to 519. In 2019, ASC offered 189 programs, 19 exhibits, and 29 performances to our community.



# 2020

- Closed to the public March 13, 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Staff quickly pivoted to provide virtual programming. Equipment needed to adapt our programs and activities to virtual platforms was already in-house for use from previous after-school programs and summer camps.
- ASC education team crafted diverse activity videos which were shared on our website and social media platforms. Many of the virtual programs included free take & make activity supply bags available for pick-up at the museum or were delivered to ASC community partner organizations.
- Created 3D virtual reality exhibitions of all of our 2020 in-person exhibitions, accompanied by live-streamed interviews with the featured artists.
- Generated much-needed funds by hosting a virtual two-evening variety show called *Heart for the Arts* telethon. The event featured live emcees and a phone bank. It provided an opportunity for past and present ASC volunteers, hailing from across the state and the country, to participate in an event and show their support for the museum they love.
- The ARTSpace on Main and ART WORKS on Main were frequently featured in newspaper articles, radio and television programs, and shared on social media due to the successful adaptation of programs and progress.
- Served 31,964 in 2020 (up 43% from 2019). Visitors were reached from 47 states and included 25 international visitors. ASC grew its Facebook followers to 3,158 and Instagram followers to 801.

# 2021

- Staff continued digital output for broadened community access.
- Opened community access to The ARTSpace on Main and ART WORKS and planned for use of Artist in Residence facilities.
- Conducted Community Needs Assessment and Strategic and Business Planning.
- Received several awards for The ARTSpace projects, including a Merit Award during the 2021 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Arkansas Design Awards, the 2021 Award for Outstanding Achievement in Adaptive Reuse from Preserve Arkansas, and Bronze Award for Adaptive Reuse from the South Central chapter of the American Society of Interior Design (ASID).
- Served 50,549 in 2021 (up 58% from 2020). Visitors were reached from 22 states. ASC grew its Facebook followers to 3,521 and Instagram followers to 977.





Rashawn Penister, *Patience*, 2019, ASC 2019.011.000

# PLANNING ELEMENTS

- **SWOT assessment of the Covid-19 pandemic impact at ASC and among others Arts and Sciences/Maker Spaces and their strategic adjustments.**
- **Interviews with Arkansas agencies and foundations focused on STEM, STEAM, Arts and Tech and making.**
- **Staff, board, and key interviews to identify opportunities and successes of the current Strategic Plan 2016-2021 and budget or business plan.**
- **Community Needs Assessment derived from online interviews.**
- **Interactive work sessions with the staff to devise a draft strategic and business plan.**

# INTENDED OUTCOMES

- **Freshen ASC mission, vision, and message.**
- **Community needs assessment with findings, observations, and recommendations.**
- **Draft 5-year strategic plan in narrative and waterfall format.**
- **Strategic abstract with performance timeline, success measurement and responsibility matrix.**
- **Sustainable business and marketing plan.**

## STRENGTHS

- 50-year Cultural Crossroad Legacy
- Two transformational facilities added to campus
- Artist in Residence accommodations
- Staff commitment and creativity
- Permanent Collection
- Windgate grant & endowment success
- STEAM outreach to community partners
- Strong theater program



## WEAKNESSES

- Low awareness across Southeast Arkansas 10-counties
- Membership decline to 380
- Limited funding & storage for Permanent Collection
- Lack of student transportation to museum
- Youth scholarship

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Cash flow from two new facilities
- Engage communities and partners
- Expand family-oriented programs/events
- Grow membership
- Launch mobile access across Southeast Arkansas
- Build business and community partnerships



## THREATS

- Continuing population decline
- Increased community crime
- Pandemic and/or economic challenges
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Need for sustainable funding

# FIVE STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

*The strategic planning process highlighted five strategic elements addressed in the plan.*

1. Funding sustainability; expansion of partnerships, membership, and Trustee and Endowment capacity building.
2. Partnership with area businesses, communities and schools.
3. Cultural crossroads market awareness of collection and destination.
4. STEAM: Theater, Art and Science; Business partnerships through workforce.
5. Community Engagement:  
Focus: Serve the broader community through family-inclusion  
Art Education for all  
CrEATe Lab and workforce training

# OBSERVATIONS

- Fiduciary role of board to set and achieve goals.
- Cash flowing and integration of ARTSpace and ART WORKS is 2022's primary goal.
- Focus on partnerships that build ASC's capacity.
- Build strategically on ASC's collection, legacy and capacity.
- Define sustainability markers.

# 2022 MISSION

## CRITICAL STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Build cash flow for the ARTSpace and ART WORKS income and expenses.
- Create sustaining revenue streams through partnerships with Southeast Arkansas businesses, organizations, communities and schools.
- Identify and secure new working and teaching artists for all facilities.
- Grow ASC membership to 500 by Winter 2022 through marketing, promotion, and outreach.
- Enhance Southeast Arkansas awareness of ASC, its permanent collection and The ARTSpace and ART WORKS.

Qtr.	Goal	Actions
1Q	Implement the ASC 2022-2027 Strategic Plan	Review and adopt the plan
1Q	Create a "new buildings" business plan.	Define cash flow for ARTSpace/ART WORKS
1Q	Begin artist-based outreach	Identify working artists to grow ASC faculty.
1Q	Apply for AAM Museum Assessment Program (by Feb. 1)	Prepare for the AAM reaccreditation process.
2Q	Create a "sustaining partners network"	Engage Southeast Arkansas partners.
2Q	Enhance awareness of new program and event opportunities.	Create outreach theater, art and education programs.
3Q	Launch Artist in Residence program.	Enhance collection and mission interpretation.
4Q	Assess strategic process.	Discern progress and recalibrations.
4Q	Grow membership by 500 by Dec 31, 2022.	Create family-oriented marketing plan.

# 2023 MISSION

## CRITICAL STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Partner with regional communities, agriculture and businesses to monetize financial support.
- Rebrand ASC’s cultural crossroads mission through celebrations of Southeast Arkansas’ diverse, rural cultures via art exhibits that encourage creativity, imagination and equity.
- Promote ASC events and programs supported by equity and quality of life programming supported by business and community sponsorships.
- Continue implementation of the AAM Museum Assessment Program.
- Continue ASC membership growth to 650 by Winter 2023.
- Partner with Southeast Arkansas communities to encourage middle income and family of color engagement in ASC school, family-oriented and community programs.

Qtr.	Goal	Actions
1Q	Assess/update Endowment growth plan/timeline.	Determine adjustments to \$30,000,000 goal.
1Q	Complete AAM Museum Assessment Program.	Assess readiness and timeline for AAM.
1Q	Set 2023 “new buildings” cash flow goals.	Implement policy and funding changes.
2Q	Rebrand ASC’s Cultural Crossroads mission.	Define crossroad elements to celebrate.
2Q	Assess 2023 650 membership goal.	Launch a family-oriented membership focus.
3Q	Implement equity and quality of life programming.	Devise programs and events to build equity and quality of life in Southeast Arkansas.
4Q	Assess strategic process.	Discern progress and recalibration.

# 2024 MISSION

## CRITICAL STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Encourage digital public access and interpretation to the collection across Southeast Arkansas.
- Prepare for the 2026 American Alliance of Museums reaccreditation.
- Leverage the Windgate ARTSpace/ART WORKS grant to demonstrate ASC's capacity to implement major grants.
- Seek collaborations that advance ASC's interests, assets and legacy.
- Mobilize arts, theater and STEAM resources to Southeast Arkansas partner communities.
- Seek assessments, by UAPB and SEARK, of ASC's education programs and its economic impact/equity impact.
- Continue ASC membership growth to 750 by Winter 2024.

Qtr.	Goal	Actions
1Q	Assess/update Endowment growth plan/timeline.	Determine adjustments to \$30,000,000 goal by 2032.
1Q	Assess 2024 750 membership goal.	Discern 2024 membership promotion adjustments.
2Q	Promote digital access to the collection.	Launch online access and interpretation toward redefining the cultural crossroads mission.
2Q	Begin 2026 American Alliance of Museums reaccreditation process.	Apply for reaccreditation.
3Q	Mobilize arts, theater and STEAM resources.	Schedule outreach visits to selected partner communities.
3Q	Partner with UAPB and SEARK.	Assess ASC economic/equity impact.
4Q	Assess financial sustainability, membership and Endowment progress.	Measure progress on cash flow, regional partners, membership and endowment.
4Q	Discern AAM reaccreditation progress/timeline.	Evaluate elements of the AAM requirements.

# 2025 MISSION

## CRITICAL STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Focus on the AAM reaccreditation timeline, documents, and assignments.
- Expedite the AAM reaccreditation timeline.
- Mobilize arts, theater and STEAM resources to selected Southeast Arkansas communities.
- Promote workforce opportunities through STEAM programs with businesses.
- Enumerate the experienced and anticipated changes for the self-study.
- Achieve ASC 1,000-member goal by Winter 2025.

Qtr.	Goal	Actions
1Q	Assess the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan progress.	Review and modify the plan.
1Q	Focus on the AAM reaccreditation process.	Update the documents, timeline and assignments.
1Q	Confirm 1,000-member 2025 goal.	Set strategies, adjustments and assignments.
2Q	Evaluate financial sustainability and Endowment progress.	Adjust strategies, timeline, and assignments.
3Q	Draft the self-study responses.	Enumerate experienced and anticipated changes.
3Q	Expedite the AAM reaccreditation timeline.	Assess AAM progress. Adjust the timeline and assignments.
4Q	Mobilize arts, theater and STEAM.	Assess 3Q 2024 outreach progress and update.
4Q	Assess AAM progress.	Adjust timeline and assignments.

# 2026 MISSION

## CRITICAL STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Host AAM reaccreditation visitation.
- Integrate ARTSpace and ASC marketing to grow community and business awareness/support/engagement to sustain ASC operations and programming.
- Replace PastPerfect museum software @ 1,000 ASC members.
- Celebrate the works of area upcoming and successful artists.
- Employ the ASC permanent collection as a basis for art making/learning activities.
- Seek grant funding for a mobile unit and outreach program to the Southeast Arkansas communities.
- Assess school-oriented “theater in a box” programs.

Qtr.	Goal	Actions
1Q	Plan and schedule AAM visitation.	Coordinate visitation with all parties.
1Q	Replace PastPerfect museum software.	Order software update.
2Q	Assess theater and art box programs.	Determine updates to the outreach programs.
2Q	Reassess “sustaining partner network.”	Outline changes and assignments to meet ASC financial needs.
3Q	Identify funders to support cultural crossroads outreach and programs.	Leverage Windgate experience to add foundations to support outreach programs.
3Q	Celebrate upcoming and successful artists.	Add this celebration to the ASC digital library.
4Q	Assess/update Endowment growth plan/timeline.	Determine adjustments to \$30,000,000 goal by 2032.
4Q	Assess the strategic plan progress.	Identify areas of success and need.

# 2027 MISSION

## CRITICAL STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

- Assess, interpret and integrate the findings, observations and recommendations of the AAM reaccreditation.
- Draft a 2027-2032 Strategic and Business plan to reflect the AAM reaccreditation.
- Cement sustaining revenue streams through formal partnerships across Southeast Arkansas businesses, organizations, communities and schools.
- Promote regional engagement with ARTSpace, ART WORKS, and ASC.
- Reinforce Community awareness of ARTSpace, ART WORKS, and ASC and its collective impact on Southeast Arkansas.
- Enhance ASC's permanent collection, its preservation and growth.

Qtr.	Goal	Actions
1Q	Assess the AAM findings and recommendations.	Determine strategic plan adjustments from study.
1Q	Create a 2027-2032 strategic plan.	Outline 2027-2032 goals, timeline and assignments.
2Q	Announce AAM findings and strategic plan.	Schedule live and digital presentations celebrating the AAM accreditation.
2Q	Interpret the AAM findings.	Develop a storyline and campaign.
3Q	Build awareness of ASC impact.	Identify elements of ASC's impact and legacy.
3Q	Promote regional engagement.	Present live and digital access to the collection, programs and events.
4Q	Cement sustaining revenue streams.	Outline AAM changes and assignments to meet ASC financial needs.
4Q	Celebrate the AAM accreditation.	Schedule community ASC celebrations.

# ASC BUSINESS PLAN

*Objective: Achieve ASC program and operations financial sustainability by 2028.*

## MARKETING

- Membership goals, calendar, and strategies.
- Promote the Cultural Crossroads celebration message throughout Southeast Arkansas.
- Build education, business and community partnerships throughout Southeast Arkansas.
- Package family-oriented programs and events.
- Create community awareness of the importance of American Alliance of Museums certification.

## OPERATING REVENUE

- Cash flow plan and goal for The ARTSpace on Main, ART WORKS, and ASC.
- Promote community access to the ASC campus: The ARTSpace and ART WORKS.
- Encourage community rental of the new facilities and ASC.
- Launch an interpretive Artist in Residence Program.
- Devise workforce programming with Southeast Arkansas businesses.

## NON-OPERATING REVENUE

- Membership goal, calendar, and strategies.
- Grow the ASC Endowment to \$30,000,000 by 2031.
- Leverage the Windgate grant outcome as ASC's capacity to manage large grants.
- Draft a 2022-2027 grant pipeline focused on program, scholarship, and personnel priorities.
- Cultivate Southeast Arkansas business sponsorships of arts, science and theater.
- Grant prospects, priorities, calendar and pipeline responsibilities.

## HUMAN RESOURCES

- Inventory and project personnel needs through 2027.
- Create an organizational chart and supporting job titles/compensation/descriptions.
- Devise a staff training and succession calendar plan.

# ASC

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*The Arts & Science Center for Southeast Arkansas (ASC), 701 S. Main St., in Pine Bluff, is accredited with the American Alliance of Museums. ASC presents programming in the visual arts, performing arts, and the sciences through exhibitions, performances, classes and local partnerships. Gallery admission is always free. ASC is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. In 2021, ASC opened two new facilities as part of its "ARTx3" campus - The ARTSpace on Main and ART WORKS on Main, located at 623 and 627 S. Main St.*

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